

wait wait (don't tell me)

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by [ElasticElla](#)

Summary

Alina waits.

(Or: Baghra doesn't talk to Alina at the winter fete.)

Notes

...i too cannot believe my first work for this ship isn't dark enemy fucking fun times, idk bro

“I’ll be waiting,” Alina says, and with a final kiss, Aleksander leaves her in his quarters.

Alone and giddy, she’s tempted to explore, adrenaline pumping through her veins. There’s a promising bookshelf, an even more tempting desk littered with loose papers, and a bed where – a hot flush runs through her – a bed where she expects to land after he returns.

She circles the room once, lightness bubbling in her chest. Baghra had provoked her power through pain, the tests went that way too, but standing in that room, basking in her own glow, Aleksander enraptured – it isn’t the only way. Isn’t even the best way. Tonight proved that, her fingertips still tingle with echoes of power. (For the first time, the idea of ending the Fold doesn’t feel impossible.)

Alina wanders into his washroom, eyes stuck on an enormous bathtub in the room’s center. Made of some polished black metal, pitchers of fresh water surround it. Her giddiness has grown delirious, filling the tub without further thought.

He likes her in his colors.

Armed with a magnifying glass, Alina heats the water, steam filling the room. She strips down, takes her hair down, the air far warmer than before, thicker. There’s a distant thud she ignores, dipping her toe and then easing entirely into the heated water. She sighs happily, eyes falling shut as she dunks her head.

With the tub’s size, she can easily have all but her face submerged, by far the most relaxing bath she’s ever had. Genya is dear to her, but all of her attendants do not make for a pleasant scrub. She’s worldly enough to know what that is now, Alina thinks, amused. With a deep exhale, she drifts, content and meditative.

“Alina?” Kirigan calls a bit later, and she sits up, head and shoulders above water.

“In here.”

His footsteps are quick, stops in the doorway as he spots her, expression carefully closed off. He stands in all he wore before, sharp and beautiful as a blade.

Alina raises an eyebrow, says over her shoulder, “You must have soap in here somewhere.”

Naked relief races across his face, replaced quick, but not quick enough for her to miss it. There’s a story there, probably not a good one, not for tonight. She looks forwards again, stretches her legs out, even with her toes, can’t reach the tub’s opposite side.

There’s movement behind her, neck prickling, but she doesn’t turn again. He kneels beside her, kefta gone and sleeves rolled up, armed with an ornate bottle and cloth. His eyes are akin to the night sky without stars, could drown in their inky darkness.

“May I?”

Alina nods, doesn't trust her throat to speak. Brings her left hand up for him as he dips the cloth in water, pours soap upon it.

His gaze drops to her hand, sets the bottle down and cradles her hand with one of his, gently lathering with the other. Turns her hand over and repeats, moves up to do her wrist next. He inches up her arm slow, her eyelids fluttering half-closed at the sensation. Reaches the top of her arm, and dips the limb under water, rinses away the suds and chases them with a large hand.

Alina's breath catches, wonders where he will go next. The water is beginning to cool, pleasant against the burning heat wherever he touches. He moves behind her, and for all the weight of his gaze removed, anticipation replaces it in equal measure.

He collects her hair, makes a loose knot above her head, "Hold this."

Alina does, uses her clean hand, arm still tingling with phantom touches.

His hand comes around to cup her neck, the other washing the back. She swallows against his fingers, wets her lips.

"You're rather good at this. Have a lot of practice?"

Aleksander snorts, does her shoulders next.

"Truthfully, I cannot remember the last time I did this for someone."

"You must've," she accuses. "You're rather good at it."

He rinses her shoulders, cupping water in his hands, and then places them back upon her shoulders, pressing his thumbs in tiny circles. His fingers fan out, pressure moving lower as Alina rolls her head, feels incredible.

She moans, his fingers going still, and as very nice as this is, Alina has run out of patience. Dropping her hair, she turns around, moves closer, to the edge of the tub and grasps his face with her dripping hands. She feels like a creature out of legend, and Aleksander looks more than surprised, looks astounded.

Alina kisses him.

Alina kisses him and her chest implodes, feels impossible they've done this before. His hands reach out, and she redirects, standing up with him. Breaks the kiss to step out of the tub, brings the light forward that's built up in her gut, a dome of light enclosing them.

There are shadowy swirls amongst the light, and Aleksander's eyes reflect tiny pinpricks of light. She doesn't think he's doing it on purpose, a melding to be repeated. Over and over, intimately so.

He cups her face, "We can do anything Alina. Together, we can remake the world. Redraw the maps as you choose."

She presses her cheek into his palm, steps closer, drips over whatever was left of his dry clothes.

“In the morning.”

(Morning turns to noon to night to morning again before much talking happens, before they speak of the future.)

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